

CDF NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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State Releases Assessment of California's Forests and Rangeland

Sacramento – Private timberlands in California are growing more than 50% more volume than is being harvested, and new harvest rules and restoration programs on managed lands are improving watersheds from the practices of the past. Those are just some of the many conclusions presented by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) in “The Changing California: Forest and Range 2003 Assessment” at today’s Board of Forestry and Fire Protection meeting in Sacramento.

The 250 page report and additional web-based documents were almost four years in the making. The report is required by the Forest and Rangeland Resources Assessment and Policy Act of 1977 to assist in the development of forest and range resource policies for the state.

“This report looks at the sustainability of California’s forests through the lenses of environmental, economic and social conditions, with the belief that all can be improved without loss in another,” said CDF Director Andrea Tuttle. “As an urban state we confront a three-sided challenge for policy decisions – great demand for wood products, strong environmental commitment, and steady loss of our forested land base to development and fragmentation. The decisions we make about sustainability here affect the rest of the globe.”

Key findings of the report include:

- Approximately 15% of conifer forests, 2.7 million acres, are classified as old growth. Ninety-seven percent of this old growth has been protected in parks and federal ownership.
- Timber related logging and sawmill employment is declining in rural areas but timber remanufacturing jobs are increasing in urban areas, especially in Southern California.



- A wide range of harvest and replanting methods are used in California, including uneven aged systems, group selection, clearcutting, shelter wood and variable selection, each reflecting the tree species' need for sunlight and space.
- California's range industry faces shrinking profit margins and increasing land prices, which spurs significant conversions especially near metropolitan areas.
- New tools for sustaining large areas of working landscapes include conservation easements, selected acquisitions, regulatory incentives, and coordinated technical and financial assistance to landowners.
- Threats of fire, pests, diseases, water pollutants and invasive species can be addressed through appropriate management.

"The next step is for the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection to hold public hearings and prepare a forest resource policy statement," said Dr. William Stewart, Chief of the CDF Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP), who led the project.

A summary of the report is now available at www.fire.ca.gov and click on [Fire and Resource Assessment Program](#).

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